



# News of Polonia

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## Wiadomości Polonijne

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### Polish official: Why does the United States treat us worse than the rest of Europe?

An October 15 article by Josh Rogin in the *Foreign Policy Magazine - The Cable* report... Visitors from most EU countries can come to the United States for short stays without applying for a visa from the State Department, but Poland can't get that special status -- and it is not at all happy about it.

"Maybe one day the American Congress will find a good reason to finally lift the visa restrictions which we think are very unfair and completely unjustified," Mikołaj Dowgielewicz, Poland's Secretary of State for European Affairs, told *The Cable* in an interview.

He's referring to Poland's longstanding request to be included in the State Department's Visa Waiver Program, which currently allows citizens from 36 countries to enter the United States and stay for up to 90 days without first obtaining a visa. This is among the top agenda items for Polish officials dealing with the United States, and a leading irritant in the otherwise positive U.S.-Polish relationship.

For the Poles, the Visa Waiver Program status is a matter of pride for a country that sees itself on par with other Western European giants. Poland also sees itself as a reliable ally of the United States that has constantly deepened cooperation on a range of matters, including ballistic missile defense, and the deployment of a proportionally large contingent of troops to Afghanistan.

"Maybe one day here in Washington people will treat Poland as a reliable and important partner in the European Union, not just some country with sentimental links," Dowgielewicz said.

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### PAC Fall Meeting

By: *John Czop*



**L. Parliamentarian Steve Tokarski, President Frank Spula, VP Financial Development Paul Sosnowski, Esq., First VP Virginia Sikora, Outgoing Secretary Wallace Zieliński (with his "Award" for 9 years of outstanding service), Incoming Secretary Timothy Kuźma, and VP Cultural Affairs Deborah Majka. (Officers not in photograph) - VP Polish Affairs Bożena Kamińska, VP American Affairs Dean Antholny Bajdek, VP Public Relations Susanne Lotarski, VP Membership Development Roy Pucko Jr., Treasurer Robert Maycan**

This article summarizes what happened at the Polish American Congress's (PAC) Council of National Directors (CND) Chicago Fall Meeting, which took place at the Holiday Inn, Skokie, Illinois on October 13 - 14, 2010. On Thursday 14 October, 65 out of 119 national directors were present, a more numerous attendance than at meetings in the recent past.

#### American Agenda Report

On October 13, the CND Meeting began with the report of the PAC's National Vice President for American Affairs, Dean Anthony J. Bajdek (who also is long serving president of the PAC's Massachusetts Eastern Division). His report included a presentation on aspects of the military history of Poland and how it was commemorated in the past versus the way we commemorate it in the present. He showed how the 500th anniversary of the victory of the Polish-Lithuanian Alliance Army over the Teutonic Knights at the Battle of Grunwald/Zalgiris/Tannenberg was commemorated in Krakow in 1910, when Poland was partitioned and erased from the map of Europe, versus the commemoration in this year of the 600th anniversary of Grunwald, when Poland is back on the map.

Next, Dean Bajdek described the achievements of the PAC's two Divisions in Massachusetts in order to encourage PAC Divisions in other states to work together to advance Polish priorities in their state legislatures. The Massachusetts Divisions have persuaded the Massachusetts General Court (this is the name of the state legislature in Massachusetts) to enact two pro-Polish resolutions over the past six years in order to support Poland's accession to the United States State Department's Visa Waiver Program. Bajdek has drafted model resolutions to help to achieve this important goal which the PAC Divisions in other states should use to persuade their state legislators that United States visa requirements should be waived for Poles.

"Be not afraid," as the late Pope John Paul II said. Dean Bajdek recalled the Polish Pope's exhortation to the Polish people which made them, in the late 1970's, aware of their own strength through faith in their triumph over adversity through collective action. We need this same kind of awareness today among Polish Americans. Dean Bajdek asks us to stop being reticent or bashful. Instead, we must let our legislators know our concerns about America's policy toward our kin country, Poland. Every state where PAC Divisions are active should hold an Annual Polish American Congress Day in the halls of their state legislatures, as does Massachusetts.

Dean Bajdek calls on us to take action now: "so that the federal and state governments of our great nation realize that Polish Americans are capable of engaging in intelligent and substantive activism which cannot be disregarded." Moreover, Bajdek underlined that our "intelligent and substantive activism" must be "sustained over time." This is necessary because our opponents have persuaded the House of Representatives to pass by voice vote H.R. 371 which calls on today's Polish Government promptly to enact legislation on restitution /compensation of World War II era private property that was nationalized by the Communists on conquered Polish territory.

H.R. 371 has stalled favorable action by Congress on Poland's accession to the Visa Waiver Program. This is why, over the near term, progress on visa waivers for Poles must come from state legislatures. Bajdek also observed that: 60% of those now serving in Congress also served in state legislatures. By letting today's state legislators know our agenda now, we are preparing tomorrow's federal legislators to take favorable action on issues that matter to Polish Americans.

#### Polish Agenda Report

The PAC's National Vice President for Polish Affairs, Mrs. Bożena Kamińska (Downstate New York Division) noted that it was a tragic year for Poland. The April 10 crash of the airplane carrying the Polish President and his entourage at Smoleńsk Military Airfield caused the death of many of Poland's key conservative and traditionalist leaders. This disaster made immediate and direct our past memories of the mass murder on Stalin's orders of Polish Army officers and intellectuals at Katy and other killing fields near Smoleńsk in the spring of 1940.

Mrs. Kamińska let us know that the Institute of National Remembrance (IPN) has prepared educational displays on Jedwabne and Katyn that should be shown in the United States. Those interested in more information about these displays should contact Mrs. Kamińska via the PAC's official website.

After having attended the Polish Teachers' convention in San Francisco in May and after having worked with Wspólnota Polska, Mrs. Kamińska feels that the PAC needs to improve its image.

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### John Paul II next in line for beatification?

### Stanisław Sołtys... Poland's newest saint

By: *Robert Strybel*

Our Warsaw Correspondent

WARSAW—Thousands of Poles were in St. Peter's Square to personally witness the canonization of Poland's newest saint, as millions of their country followed the ceremony on live TV. Elevated to the Catholic sainthood was 14th-century monk Stanisław Sołtys Kazimierczyk. As a Canon Regular of the Lateran during Kraków's "golden age", he devoted his life to the Holy Eucharist and was an inspiring preacher and popular confessor who cared for the sick and poor. He got the nickname Kazimierczyk from the Kraków suburb he called home.

Stanisław Sołtys (1433-89), who cared little for personal comforts and gave his all in the service of God and fellow-man, was regarded as a living saint by many of those who had come into contact with him. He was a personal friend of another saintly Pole, Jan Kanty. People began praying to him shortly after his death, and a local official, Starosta Komorowski of Oświęcim, had his sight restored after invoking the late monk's intercession. But Stanisław could not be called blessed until 1993, when he was beatified by Pope John Paul II.

The canonization of St. Stanisław Sołtys Kazimierczyk was presided over by his successor, Pope Benedict XVI. In his sermon the German-born Pontiff cited the Polish monk as "an example and intercessor for us (...). He learned faith and piety from his mother and father in Kazimierz. There he worked as a priest and educator and was attentive to the care of the needy. In a particular way, he was devoted to the Eucharist through his ardent love for Christ, living the mystery of the death and resurrection which take place in a bloodless way during Holy Mass."

Last June, Pope Benedict sent his canonization expert Archbishop Angelo Amato to preside over the Warsaw beatification of Father Jerzy Popiełuszko. The 37-year-old Solidarity chaplain, who had been abducted, tortured and murdered by General Wojciech Jaruzelski's secret police in 1984, was proclaimed a martyr for the faith, and no miracle was required for his beatification. Pilgrims from all over Poland, Polonia and beyond continue to flock to his tomb in the forecourt of Warsaw's St. Stanislaus Kostka Church. Attached to the two kneelers positioned at the foot of the grave is the text of a prayer to Blessed Jerzy.

It goes: "Lord God, the source of all good, I thank You that in Your love You bestowed the dignity of the priesthood upon Blessed Father Jerzy Popiełuszko and sent him to fervently preach Your Word, dispense the Holy Sacraments, act in Your name and be close to everyone, calling them to forgiveness, unity and peace. You endowed him with the grace of martyrdom through which he came to resemble Christ on the Way of the Cross. We venerate and thank You, Lord, for this great gift to the Church, particularly because You have made him an intercessor in the bestowal of grace. In

*Saint Stanislaw Soltyś to page 15*

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